

Representative
MARK SCHOESLER

Senator
LARRY SHEAHAN

Representative
DON COX



2001 Session Outlook

Serving Asotin, Whitman, Adams and south Spokane counties

CONTACTING YOUR 9TH DISTRICT LEGISLATIVE TEAM

Senator

LARRY SHEAHAN

403 Legislative Bldg.
Olympia, WA 98504
(360) 786-7620
sheahan_la@leg.wa.gov

Representative

MARK SCHOESLER

402 Legislative Bldg.
Olympia, WA 98504
(360) 786-7844
schoesle_ma@leg.wa.gov

Representative

DON COX

422 John L. O'Brien Bldg.
Olympia, WA 98504
(360) 786-7942
cox_do@leg.wa.gov

Challenges, opportunities face 57th Legislature

Dear Friends,

On Jan. 8, we embarked on another historic legislative session in Olympia. The 105-day session is the first of the new century, and for a second time in a row the state House of Representatives is tied at 49-49 — the chamber equally divided between Republicans and Democrats. As one Capitol veteran put it, "It's like lightning striking the same guy twice during the same storm."

Shared control in the legislative process wasn't easy during the last two years, but we made it work. The experience of doing the people's business in a 49-49 tie underscored how sharing power can actually be a very positive tool in negotiating solutions to difficult issues. Finding common ground requires cooperation and commitment by both sides of the aisle to bridge partisan differences. It was often not a smooth or easy process, but we've had two years to get accustomed to what amounts to a textbook example of divided government.

This session preview is an overview of some of the issues we will be addressing during the next few months — issues that will have an impact on you and your family. Also included in this newsletter is a short questionnaire on topics of interest to people in the 9th District. Your comments will help guide the many decisions that we make during the session.

If you have concerns or questions please let us know. We are always glad to hear from you.

DON COX
State Representative

LARRY SHEAHAN
State Senator

MARK SCHOESLER
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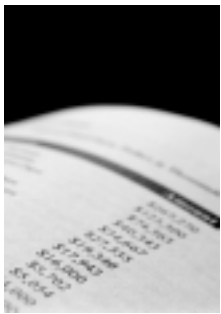
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Budget will take center stage

We've got some big-ticket items to address this year, not the least of which is forging a general fund budget in the face of a shortfall of more than \$1 billion in the coming biennium. In fact, the cost of simply maintaining current services will be greater than the state's legal spending limit. The budget-writing scenario is dramatically impacted by the education initiatives approved by voters. For example, Initiative 732 (to provide annual pay raises for teachers and public-school and community college staff), is expected to cost more than \$345 million and must be funded out of the operating budget. There are also other basic policy assumptions to be factored in, including higher costs for health care – projected to grow by about 18 percent.

Gov. Locke has proposed a \$22.7 billion budget that many of us believe could drag the state into a financial emergency and set the stage for a tax increase. Not only does the Locke budget include \$1.2 billion in new spending, but it would alter the voter-approved spending limit and use almost half of the state's \$1 billion reserve.

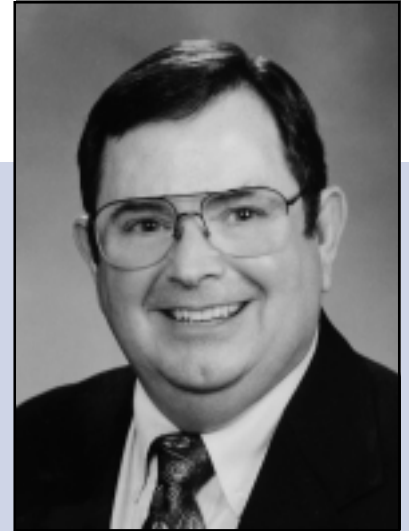


A little history illustrates our concern. When he was still a legislator and chair of the former House Ways and Means Committee, Locke engineered a budget that spent **\$695 million** more than expected revenue and led to the biggest tax increase in state history in 1993. Under the proposal offered by the governor last month, expenditures would exceed expected revenue by **\$425 million**. We must work to ensure that the painful lesson of 1993 is not repeated.

The budget-writing decisions the Legislature faces in the months ahead are not unlike the hard budgeting choices facing families and businesses throughout the state. Washington's citizens understand how to set priorities and manage their personal and business finances. **The taxpayers of Washington have made it clear they want and expect us to control the growth of government and maintain responsible budget policies.**

Rep. Cox is taking on new leadership responsibilities this session as co-chair of the House Higher Education Committee. Don brings to the role of co-chair a record of exceptional qualifications

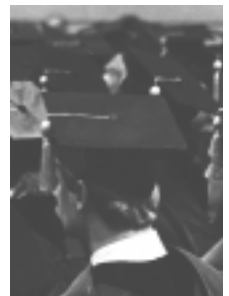
as a career educator, including positions as director of the WSU Rural Education Center, former superintendent of the Colfax School District, and Associate Professor in the College of Education.



Taking a page from the example of tough discipline in managing family finances, the unusually difficult budgeting process this year will require broad consensus-building by both the governor and the Legislature to identify efficiencies, set sound priorities, hold spending in check, and respect the message from the taxpayers who have directed us to do more with less.

Higher education

Quality education is a top priority for Washingtonians. We need to continue investing in our state's institutions of higher education in order to be ahead of the economic cycles. Citizens expect and deserve access to top-quality state colleges and universities. Students attending Washington colleges and universities deserve the highest level of instruction. In order to ensure access and remain competitive with research universities and colleges across the country, we simply must commit to investing the necessary funds. Priorities for the year include:



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- Providing compensation commensurate with that provided in I-732 for public school employees.
- Ensuring additional promotion and retention money.
- Holding down tuition increases.
- Improving access to higher education through grants, scholarships and distance learning.

Revising the primary system



Last June, the U.S. Supreme Court struck down California's blanket-primary elections as unconstitutional. Washington's system is identical to California's. Under current law, Washingtonians may cast ballots for primary candidates regardless of party affiliation. The Supreme Court changed that in

holding that political parties have the right to determine which voters may participate in their primaries. Most states use either an "open" primary, in which voters select one party's ballot, or a "closed" primary, in which voters must register by political party to vote in that party's primary.

Input from the district indicates that many people are uneasy about the loss of privacy and independence if they are required to identify their political party or choose a ballot with only one party's slate of candidates, as is the case in other states. Washington voters have a long history of independent voting and cherish their political privacy. We expect this will be among the most contentious issues of the 2001 legislative session.

DOE shoreline rules

New shoreline management rules were signed in November by Tom Fitzsimmons, director of the Department of Ecology. In addition to being cumbersome and costly, the new rules impose drastic changes in the way Washington shorelines are governed and dramatically affect landowners' ability to manage their property. In some instances, these regulations will result in unconstitutional takings of property, or limiting a person's ability to subdivide his or her land, potentially jeopardizing generations of hard work and sacrifice.

Rural counties will be hit hard as local governments (already struggling from the impact of I-695) face an unfunded mandate to shoulder the costs of updating their master shorelines plans.



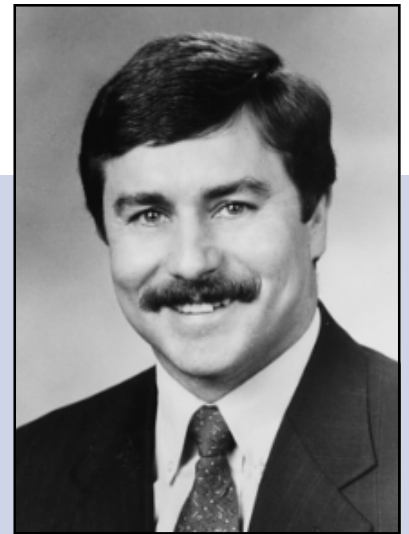
Ecology has ignored legislative direction and overstepped its authority, and many lawmakers have expressed interest in sponsoring legislation that would bring the department under tighter rein. There's a disturbing arrogance about an agency creating laws without legislative review. In a representative form of government, the department's conduct has been short-sighted and oppressive.

Toll-free Hotline:

1-800-562-6000

TDD (hearing impaired):

1-800-635-9993



Now serving his fifth term as a member of the 9th District legislative team, Rep.

Schoesler was re-elected House Republican Whip—a key caucus leadership position. In

addition to a seat on the powerful Rules Committee, Mark will also continue to be a strong and dependable voice for the agriculture community and higher education, serving on the House Agriculture and Ecology Committee and the Capital Budget Committee.

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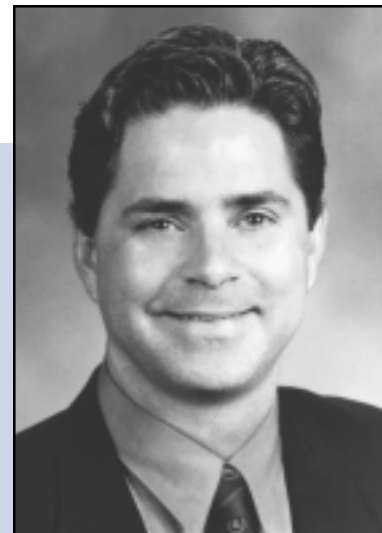
Salmon restoration

Another factor driving the budget crisis is the ongoing cost of administering the state's salmon-restoration efforts – potentially the most expensive and ambitious effort to protect a wild animal in the world. A key player in ensuring that we get the most bang for the buck for recovery efforts is the Northwest Power Planning Council, the four-state agency with the job of balancing salmon and wildlife



protection with electricity production. The council's fish and wildlife program includes acquisition of land for habitat conservation, and while habitat conservancy is laudable, land purchases (and removal of land from public tax rolls) ought to be weighed against the need to ensure that resources get to restoration projects that will be most effective and deliver the best results – such as restoring streamflow to ensure clean, unobstructed shallow water. **Ratepayers need to know that dollars spent on fish and wildlife recovery are being spent wisely and in the most effective way possible.**

"As the new Senate Republican Floor Leader, Sen. Sheahan will oversee floor debate for the Senate Republicans, paying close attention to parliamentary rules and procedures. And as a member of the Senate Republican leadership team, Larry will also have a role in setting the agenda for Senate Republicans."



Blair Elementary in need

The students and teachers of Blair Elementary at Fairchild Air Force Base are in need of help. Blair Elementary is one of the oldest and most dilapidated schools still in use in Washington. Constructed in 1951, it has had no significant renovations since 1981. The school is in dire need of repairs to both the exterior and interior, including such items as fire suppression, heating, air conditioning, electrical, plumbing, and technology. Its electrical and heating systems are getting so old that parts are hard to find. Since there is no cafeteria, lunches are wheeled down the hallways and children eat in their classrooms.



Sen. Sheahan toured Blair Elementary at the end of the year. After his visit, the senator sent a series of letters to the superintendent of public instruction, Washington's congressional delegation, both U.S. senators, President Bush, and the new secretary of education, requesting \$10.2 million in federal funds for renovation of the school.

Our children need adequate facilities in which to learn and grow. We will continue to make education one of our highest priorities.

Phone _____

Please
place
stamp
here



P.O. Box 40600
Olympia, Washington 98504-0600

Thanks!

Promoting the American dream for all

House Republicans have legislation ready to fulfill our “*Pledge to the Citizens of Washington*,” a positive legislative agenda that addresses priorities that reflect the state’s most critical challenges. Cornerstones of the pledge include controlling property taxes, improving the quality of education and accountability in public schools, and assisting seniors with the costs of prescription drugs.

2001 House Republicans’ Pledge to the Citizens of Washington:

- **Lower the tax burden for those who need it most.**
 - Phase out the state property tax levy to help homeowners and renters.
- **Leave no child behind.**
 - Continue reforming schools by establishing higher standards, accountability and compensation based on performance.
- **Reduce traffic congestion and improve safety.**
 - Prioritize transportation by dedicating existing transportation-related sales tax revenue to new road projects.
- **Protect neighborhoods and improve safety.**
 - Make methamphetamine production and distribution a “strike” and increase the jail time for those who expose children to the drug.
- **Ensure access to affordable prescription drugs.**
 - Ensure that seniors have access to medication through state assistance.
- **Preserve our natural resources and provide clean hydro-electric energy through our dams.**
 - Maintain high environmental standards to protect clean air and water and promote salmon recovery through effective, science-based solutions at the local level.
 - Better manage our water resources by increasing storage capacity.
- **Make government more citizen-centered and accountable.**
 - Require rules adopted by state agencies that invoke the force of law be approved by the Legislature prior to permanent implementation.